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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LA PAZ 000459

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: CHALLENGES FOR SUCRE

Classified By: Charge D'Affairs David M. Robinson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: As Sucre prepares to host the Constituent Assembly (CA) as early as August this year, it and Chuquisaca, the department in which it is contained, face more than just structural and logistical challenges. The newly-elected MAS prefect, David Sanchez, appears to be a party outsider, and to be struggling with how to deliver services to his constituents with limited resources. The opposition political parties and citizens groups in Chuquisaca agree that their goal is to postpone the CA as long as possible, hoping that President Morales will become politically weaker with time, but are not likely to reach consensus in the critical next few weeks on the CA's enabling legislation. While all of Poloff's interlocutors during a visit to Sucre February 16-17 noted an increased Cuban presence in the department, they were at odds regarding whether such a presence was a blessing or unwanted interference. End summary.

12. (C) Bolivia's constitutional capital, Sucre, is making the necessary preparations to host the Constituent Assembly (CA), currently scheduled for August. A town of only about 300,000 people, Sucre has a limited infrastructure, and no existing building in which the CA could convene, much less housing for the approximately 150 representatives (and possibly their families) who will live in Sucre for the duration of the assembly. Construction of those buildings, as well as beautification projects for the plazas and parks, is underway, but presents logistical challenges given the short time frame.

13. (C) The newly-elected MAS prefect, David Sanchez, appears to be a party outsider, and to be struggling with how to deliver services to his constituents with limited resources. Just before the election, local MAS party officials asked Sanchez, a professor of economics and a person of strong religious faith, to be the MAS candidate for prefect. Sanchez seems genuinely interested in helping his constituents, but lamented many administrative challenges. He said many of the prefecture's staff resigned in January but are taking the vacation they are entitled to by law, preventing him from filling in behind them and leaving him with empty desks and a hefty payroll. He has a professional

core of advisors, but cannot pay them a regular salary. Sanchez said that his staff lacks internal communications capabilities such as intra-office email, and that as a consequence the day-to-day business moves slowly. He requested technical assistance, as well as support in the area of conflict resolution and communication with his indigenous constituents. Regarding the CA, Sanchez backed away both from the MAS proposal and a possible unified proposal from the nine prefects, saying that his role will be to support his constituents' proposal (if one is submitted).

14. (C) The opposition political parties and citizens groups in Chuquisaca agree that their goal is to postpone the CA as long as possible, hoping that President Morales will become politically weaker with time, but are not likely to reach consensus in the next few weeks on the CA's enabling legislation. Minority parties were concerned about the MAS proposal, and believe that if the CA happens quickly, the MAS's power will be unchecked.

15. (C) While all of Poloff's interlocutors February 16-17 noted an increased Cuban presence in the department, they were at odds regarding whether such a presence was a blessing or unwanted interference. Mayors in remote areas of Chuquisaca and Sanchez himself are happily receiving Cuban doctors. The city of Sucre, however, gave newly-arrived Cuban teachers a frosty reception after these teachers refused to work with the municipality's existing campaign against illiteracy. Some local government officials see this increased Cuban activity as interference, but are not likely to object publicly.

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16. (C) Comment: Our initial impressions of Sanchez, based on our first meeting with him in La Paz on February 7, were that he would be a solid Morales supporter and keep a comfortable distance from the United States. Following the second meeting in Sucre, in which Sanchez was very open and relaxed, we judge him to be a "last-minute" MAS convert, with whom this Mission can work. We will reach out to him with OTI and other USG programs to cultivate this potentially influential MAS prefect. End comment.
ROBINSON